Continuing Updates

1. City Council Matters

Brady Landfill progress

To recap, over the past several weeks, the VP Advocacy and I have been working with various stakeholders in the municipal Brady Landfill biogas energy end-user study to learn more about UMSU’s role. This list of parties includes the UM Office of Sustainability, various members of the UM President’s Executive team and administration, as well as city councilors who play an integral role on the City of Winnipeg Standing Policy Committee on Water and Waste, Riverbank Management and the Environment (WWRME).

The reason that UMSU has become sincerely invested in this study and potentially influencing the City’s final decision is due to the evidence pointing towards a high possibility for the UM Fort Garry campus to become fully reliant on renewable energy, hence drastically reducing our own footprint and contributing to our goal of Net-Zero emissions by 2030.

Since our last meeting, we learned that financial concerns have taken a back seat with many sustainability-focused initiatives on campus. The main concern is logistical, political, and data-driven. Due to this, our provincial application to the climate & green fund was cancelled. We did not find a feasible project that required a large amount of capital, which there wasn’t a party already dedicated to making progress elsewhere who had sufficient resources.

Instead, we are reconnecting with city councilors to pitch the University of Manitoba Fort Garry campus as an attractive end-user again, and strengthen our working relationships for later down the road. Specifically, we hope that Deputy Mayor Markus Chambers will be able to provide us a letter of endorsement and that we will be able to meet with Councillor Brian Mayes, the Chair of the WWRME.

U-Pass negotiations

This week, I will be getting in touch with relevant parties within City Council to see whether or not the U-Pass contract still holds some flexibility. As you will have seen in the VP Finance & Operations report, the contract negotiations have not gone as we had initially hoped – especially given the increase in the semester rate to $200.00.

One main area of concern on our end will be the logistical/administrative burden placed on UMSU by the e-pass activation charge, in addition to the extra cost for students. Another area of concern is the opt-out criteria for students who live further away from a transit stop. Provided that the semester rate is cost-neutral for the City of Winnipeg, we are finding it difficult to believe that these accommodations within the new contract are unfeasible.
Should you have any additional concerns regarding the U-Pass or transit in general, please feel welcome to continue sending your thoughts and experiences to both myself (pres@umsu.ca) and the VPFO (vpfo@umsu.ca).

2. Office Re-opening Strategy

Since our last UMSU BOD meeting, we have been piecing together details for our offices specifically. Please see the internal protocol summarized as follows:

- Office staff will only access the office for use mandatory to the work at hand, meaning that any non-essential activity is prohibited.
- Should office staff require access to the offices (for ex. to sign cheques, pick up materials), they must fill out a form which will be monitored by the Human Resources Manager, the General Manager, and the President.
- In addition, staff have received a robust document outlining proper procedure, use of masks, direction of traffic, physical distancing, capacities for each room, etc.

To provide an idea of a timeline for UMSU services and businesses:

- UMSU Health & Dental coverage, UMSU hardship, and UMSU student advocacy will continue to be available as previous
- UMSU plans for the delayed of the U-Pass while the bulk of classes and seminars occur remotely
- UMSU awareness and advocacy campaigns will continue, with ALL events and activities being facilitated online while the bulk of classes and seminars occur remotely
- UMSU Service Centre will open for the start of classes in the Fall term
- GPA’s Convenience maintains a priority and is on hold as we gauge foot traffic on campus. Note: the status of GPA’s is being monitored differently because the service poses a larger contribution for students living in residence.
- Other UMSU businesses are on hold in the meantime as well

Based on meetings with the UM Vice Provost Students, Laurie Schnarr, the University plans to make their decision regarding the Winter term by the end of September. In discussions, myself and the UMSU VP Advocacy have voiced our concerns to act in accordance with public health guidelines and ensure that students have ample resources to facilitate any transition with ease.

3. Human Resources

The UMSU HR department has been busy lately with the following:
- Updating the staff vacation policy
- Updating the executive time off policy
- A study and compilation of recommendations for Diversity & Inclusion
- Communicating inclusive mediation processes
- Re-opening best practices
- New hiring, contractual updates, staff morale, etc.

4. Manitoban Alliance of Post-Secondary Students (MAPSS) & Upcoming Campaigns

Please refer to the VP Advocacy report for introductory information pertaining to the MAPSS Fall 2020 lobby week, in time for provincial budget submissions.

If you are interested in the current status of additional organizations, our interested partners for this lobby week include:

- Red River College Students’ Association
- University of Manitoba Graduate Students’ Association
- University of Winnipeg Students’ Association (pending response from their BOD)
- Assiniboine Community College Students’ Association
- Booth College Student Council

I am still waiting for a response from:

- University College of the North Students’ Association
- Brandon University Students’ Union
- Association Etudiante de l’Universite de Saint-Boniface

In time for the momentum of this lobby week, we also plan to organize/mobilize two provincial campaigns:

1. #EducationMakesTheCut – restore operating grants to post-secondary institutions
2. #HealthHasNoBorders – bring intl primary health rates universally in line with domestic premiums

We are also working internally and with our counterparts at other institutions to continue to promote positive student unionism and the importance of a privately controlled institutional budget. Depending on how meetings and conversations go surrounding Bill 41, we are prepared to mobilize and engage the larger voice of the student body where needed.
New Updates

1. **Board of Trustees / Transit Subsidy Program**
   
The Board of Trustees met for the first time this fiscal year, last Tuesday. There remains one vacant position for a community member. The student position was filled last week.

At this meeting, we approved limited funding for the UMSU Transit Subsidy program. While information will be available on social media by now, the important things to keep in mind include:
   - Students MUST keep their receipts for the post-secondary semester e-pass ($278.00)
   - This is a **SUBSIDY** of $78.00. This will not cover the entire fee, but it will bring the cost in line with what the U-Pass would have allowed.
   - In order to be eligible, primary considerations will be given to students who will frequent campus enough for the e-pass to be the most cost-effective option and can show evidence of financial need.

Further details will be announced once the application process has been finalized and optimized by the end of September.

Other projects to look out for:
   - UNDRIP position statement ratification
   - Student election resources for underrepresented students
   - University-wide tutor registry
   - Semi-smoke free campus transition
   - UMSU Mental Health Month
   - UMSU Indigenous Students’ Month
   - UMSU Indigenous Students’ Working Group
   - UM Student Experience Committee
   - Student accessibility resources for the upcoming year
   - Student counselling and wellness resources for the upcoming year
   - UMSU Human Resources Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion report & recommendations

Projects to highlight which overlap with UMSU Vice-Presidential BOD reports
(I thought that I would add this section for accountability, regarding any of the projects which I will be taking a partnered role in to avoid redundancy in our Executive reports)
   - VPA – Provincial Lobby Week & Pre-Budget Submission Period
   - VPA – Bill 41
   - VPA/VPSL – Consent Culture Workshops for Bison Athletes
   - VPA – UM policy review working group
External Events & Meetings Attended
Note: This excludes all meetings internal to the organization. Additionally, you will notice less meetings because I took some scattered time off during the beginning of August for my final exams.

July 24 – UM International Student Arrival Meeting
July 27 – Student Care Meeting
July 28 – ALC Advocacy Meeting w/ student representatives
July 30 – Student Care Meeting
August 11 – COCA Session: Post-Secondary Mental Health Landscape
August 11 – Board of Governors
August 13 – Interview with CBC
August 13 – Interview with Manitoban (Gillian)
August 14 – Meeting with UMGSA President
August 17 – Interview with CTV
August 17 – Interview with CBC
August 17 – Meeting w/ Vice Provost Students
August 18 – Interview with CTV
August 18 – Board of Trustees Meeting
August 19 – UM International Student Arrival P2
August 19 – UMSU Governance Committee
August 19 – Meeting w/ UMSU Indigenous Students’ Rep re: Indigenous Students’ Month
August 20 – Meeting w/ Jane Lastra re: Financial Aid & Transit Subsidy Program
August 20 – UMSU Finance Committee
August 25 – Meeting w/ Brandy Usick re: Tutor Registry
August 26 – UMSU Meeting w/ Student Accessibility Services
August 26 – JFW Contract Meeting

Please note: regular in-person office hours are currently not in operation due to COVID-19. Should you wish to drop in to my on-line office hours, the time is as follows: **Wednesdays at 10 AM until 11 AM.** Please let me know if you plan to call, otherwise I will be working on other tasks during this block instead.

Please e-mail pres@umsu.ca for inquiries, concerns, the online office hour meeting link, or to schedule a call.

Thank you.